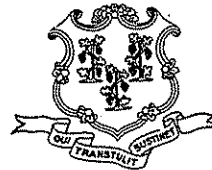


STATE OF CONNECTICUT
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March 13, 2009

To: Senator Jonathan Harris, Representative Ritter and Distinguished members of the Public Health Committee

From Dr. H. Wayne Carver, Chief Medical Examiner

Re: House Bill # 6678- An Act Concerning Revisions to Department of Public Health Licensing Statutes

I would like to address the committee on one small aspect of this house bill.

Section 12 of this bill would amend CGS 19a-323 to allow sub registrars the ability to issue cremation permits. We have some concerns as to how this would affect the workload and budget of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. (OCME)

The OCME is currently authorized to act as a sub registrar under very limited circumstances. We are limited to issuing burial/transit permits in situations in which the body is being picked up at our office by an out of state funeral home. The burden is minimal; less than one case per month. I understand that local registrars are cutting back their hours in response to economic pressures, creating difficulties for funeral directors. We work closely with funeral directors and sympathize with their plight, but, if under this bill we are authorized to issue cremation permits, I can confidently predict substantial administrative and financial burdens on this office that we are currently not prepared to shoulder.

Cremation certificates are given to the funeral directors in person. There will be tremendous pressure to issue the cremation permits at the same time. As we will issue 12,000 cremation certificates, there is potential for a huge new administrative overhead accruing to the OCME. There are also fees associated with the permit which would necessitate establishing a new section in accounts receivable and accounts payable back to the town registrars. Even if we became responsible for a fraction of the potential 24,000 transactions, we would need to modify our computer system. This would involve both our death recording system and the state's financial system (CORE-CT).

I envision two ways to mitigate this problem. One is to specifically exempt the OCME from functioning as a sub registrar for this purpose. Another, but more burdensome solution is not to expand the sub registrars' responsibilities and wait for the web based electronic registration to go on line next year.